

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A system adapted to support dental patient scheduling, comprising:

a network to communicate information relating to a manufacturing stage;

one or more patient computers coupled to the network; and

5 a server coupled to the network, the server communicating manufacturing progress information with the patient computer and performing patient scheduling when one or more dental appliances reach a predetermined manufacturing progress.

10 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the server sends a message to a patient when the appliances reach a predetermined manufacturing stage.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the server sends a message to a patient when the appliances are being marked.

15 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the server sends a message to a treating professional when the appliances reach one or more intermediate stages of manufacturing.

20 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the server sends an electronic mail message to transmit information relating to manufacturing progress.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the server maintains calendar pages for the treating professionals.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the server invites a patient to access an on-line calendar and schedule an appointment when the appliances reach the last stage of manufacturing.

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8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a network of treating professionals coupled to the network.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the server requests intervention from manufacturing personnel when one or more manufacturing stages fall behind schedule.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the server updates the patient with information relating to a delay caused by manufacturing slippage.

11. A system adapted to support scheduling appointments relating to one or more dental appliances, comprising:

a network to communicate information relating to the community;

one or more patient computers coupled to the network;

one or more treating professional computers coupled to the network; and

a server coupled to the network, the server storing data for each patient and performing patient scheduling when the dental appliances reach a predetermined manufacturing progress.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the server sends a message to a patient when the appliances reach a predetermined stage in manufacturing.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein the server sends a message to a patient  
5 when the appliances are being marked.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein the server sends a message to the treating professional computer when the appliances reach one or more manufacturing stages.

10 15. The system of claim 11, wherein the server sends an electronic mail message conveying information relating to manufacturing progress.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein the server maintains an on-line calendar to schedule appointments with a patient.

15 17. The system of claim 11, wherein the server invites a patient to log-on and schedule an appointment when the appliances reach a predetermined manufacturing stage.

20 18. The system of claim 11, wherein the treating professionals include dentists or orthodontists.

19. The system of claim 11, wherein the treating professionals perform office management operations using the server.

~~20.~~ A method to support dental patient scheduling relating to one or more dental appliances, comprising:

5 communicating manufacturing progress information with a patient computer over a wide area network; and

performing patient scheduling when one or more dental appliances reach a predetermined manufacturing progress.

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